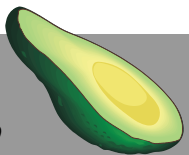


Mexican  
Hass  
Avocado



# APHIS/PPQ Industry Alert

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United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

## Regulations Governing Mexican Hass Avocado Imports

Since March 1999, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has filed numerous complaints against distributors, truckers, and grocers for violations of the regulations governing the importation of Mexican Hass avocados. Maximum fines against these companies range from \$5,000 to \$1.9 million. Officials believe that about 50 companies will be charged for violations that occurred between November 1998 and February 1999.

Industries are responsible for knowing the regulations governing imported Mexican Hass avocados. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) hopes that this publication will make it easier for distributors, truckers, and retailers to understand and follow the regulations governing this commodity.

### Background

To prevent foreign plant pests and diseases from damaging U.S. agricultural resources, Federal regulations require that certain imported plants and plant parts be subject to shipping restrictions. USDA has specific regulations governing the importation of Mexican Hass avocados. Only Hass avocados from the State of Mihoacan, Mexico, may be imported into the United States from Mexico. Mexican Hass avocados can be imported into 19 Northeastern States, and the **District of Columbia**, only from **November through February**. The 19 States are: **Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin**.

USDA allows Mexican Hass avocados to be imported into the above States at that specific time of year because the colder climate prevents avocado pests from becoming established. However, if these avocados are shipped or moved to other States, there is a risk of introducing pests that could cause millions of dollars of damage to U.S. crops.

### Federal Regulations

All steps of the Mexican Hass avocado import process are governed by Federal regulations. The regulations clearly state that Mexican Hass avocados may be imported only during the months of November through February into the areas listed above. Penalties for distribution and/or movement of Mexican Hass avocados in violation of these regulations may result in administrative penalties of up to \$1,000 per violation or criminal penalties of up to \$5,000 per violation and/or 5 years in jail.

According to regulations, the original boxes for Mexican Hass avocados should have a stamp that lists the distribution restrictions.

Each industry in the Mexican Hass avocado import process is responsible for following these regulations. Your employees should be made aware of these regulations and the penalties that may affect your company if the regulations are not followed.

These are the specific ways individual industries can follow the regulations:

**Distributors**—Wholesale distributors of Mexican Hass avocados may not distribute them outside of the approved States listed above. Distribution outside the restricted area is in violation of the regulations and subject to penalties.

**Trucking Companies**—Trucking companies should be certain not to schedule deliveries of Mexican Hass avocados to destinations outside of the approved States. Movements outside of the restricted area are in violation of the regulations and subject to penalties.

**Retail Markets**—Grocery stores, supermarkets, and other retail vendors should not move Mexican Hass avocados outside of the approved States. Movement outside the restricted area is in violation of regulations. If your establishment is located outside this area, do not order or accept deliveries of Mexican Hass avocados.

### Additional Information

For background information about Mexican Hass avocados, please visit the APHIS Website at [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov) or call APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine program at (301) 734-8295.

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